

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer system for providing proxy firewall services for a computer network, comprising:

a dispatch host computer, said dispatch host computer being connectable to an external network; and

at least one load host computer coupled to said dispatch host computer, ~~said at least one~~ each load host computer configured to provide proxy firewall services, ~~said at least one~~ and each load host computer being connectable to one or more application servers, wherein said connection from the external network is distributed from said dispatch host computer to a particular load host computer based on an analysis of the type of protocol of the connection and an analysis of activity across the load host computers.

2. (Original) The computer system of claim 1, wherein said dispatch host computer includes a monitoring element that listens for connections on multiple ports.

3. (Original) The computer system of claim 2, wherein said monitoring element is a dispatch proxy.

4. (Original) The computer system of claim 1, wherein said at least one load host computer is a protocol specific load host computer.

5. (Original) The computer system of claim 1, wherein said at least one load host computer can handle multiple protocols.

6. (Original) The computer system of claim 1, wherein said at least one load host computer and said dispatch host computer communicate information regarding the connection of said at least one load host computer to the computer system.

7. (Original) The computer system of claim 6, wherein said dispatch host computer includes a configuration file with information relating to any load host computers in the computer system.

8. (Original) The computer system of claim 7, wherein upon the connection of another load host computer to the computer system, said configuration file is updated to reflect the availability of said another load host computer in the computer system.

9. (Original) The computer system of claim 1, wherein said dispatch host computer provides proxy firewall services.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of providing proxy firewall services for a computer network,
comprising:

identifying a set of load host computers, each load host computer in said set of load host computers being configured to provide proxy firewall services;

monitoring one or more incoming ports at a dispatch host computer for a connection;
upon identification of said connection, selecting from said set of load host computers a load host computer to which said connection should be forwarded based on an analysis of the type of protocol of said connection and an analysis of activity across the load host computers.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said identifying comprises communicating information between said dispatch host computer and said load host computers relating to the availability of said load host computers.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said monitoring comprises monitoring for a connection with a dispatch proxy that monitors one or more incoming ports on said dispatch host computer simultaneously.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said selecting comprises selecting a load

host computer based on a round robin load distribution among said load host computers.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said selecting comprises selecting a load host computer based on the availability of the load host computers.

15. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said selecting comprises selecting a load host computer based on the percentage of the total number of simultaneous proxied connections the load host computer can support.

16. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said selecting comprises selecting a load host computer that can support a resource intensive protocol.

17. (Currently Amended) A firewall network resource method comprising:
identifying a resource intensive protocol;
designating a load host computer for providing primary support for said resource intensive protocol; and
routing a connection for said resource intensive protocol from a dispatch host computer to said designated load host.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising:
processing on the dispatch host computer a connection for at least one protocol other than said resource intensive protocol.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17, wherein said designated load host provides exclusive support for said resource intensive protocol and wherein designating includes analyzing activity across a plurality of host computers and selecting a load host computer based on the load host computer activity analysis.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein said designated load host is dedicated to said resource intensive protocol.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising:
designating another load host for multi-purpose support.
22. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein said dispatch host computer has multi-purpose support.
23. (Original) A method of expanding proxy firewall services for a computer network comprising:
receiving a connection at a dispatch host computer;
selecting a first load host computer to which the connection should be forwarded;
forwarding said connection to said first load host computer;
connecting a second load host computer to said dispatch host computer; and
updating a configuration file on said dispatch host computer to reflect the connection of said second load host computer, wherein upon said updating, said second load host computer is available to process forwarded connections from said dispatch host computer.
24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein said updating comprises communicating information between said dispatch host computer and said second load host computer regarding the availability of said second load host computer.
25. (Cancelled).
26. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein said connecting and said updating occur during the provision of proxy firewall services.
27. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein said connecting includes signaling the dispatch host computer upon connection.